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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VATICAN 002239

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DRL/IRF (FARR), INR (CURRY), EUR/WE (MENNUTI)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM KIRF](#) [PHUM KIRF](#) [VT](#) [RU](#) [VTPREL](#) [RU](#)

SUBJECT: VATICAN MFA TICKED OFF AT RUSSIANS

REF: A. A) CURRY/FROWICK EMAIL 04/29/02

[1](#)B. B) KOSTELANCIK/FROWICK EMAIL 04/29/02

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR JIM NICHOLSON, REASON E.O. 12958 1.5 (B), (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: VATICAN MFA RUSSIA DIRECTOR TRICARICO IS UNHAPPY AND AGITATED ABOUT THE GOR REFUSAL OF VISAS TO CATHOLIC CLERGY, ESPECIALLY TO BISHOP MAZUR. HE BELIEVES THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE GOR MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE NEW
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POLICY TO REJECT CATHOLIC CLERGY VISAS. HE SAID THE POPE AND HIS CHURCH WANT RECONCILIATION WITH THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX, BUT THAT AFTER 80 YEARS OF PERSECUTION AND A FURTHER DECADE OF ONE-SIDED ATTEMPTS AT RAPPROCHEMENT, THEY HAVE YET TO SEE PROGRESS. NEVERTHELESS, THE CHURCH WILL CONTINUE ITS MINISTRY IN RUSSIA, AND CONTINUE TO PURSUE A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX.

AGITATED OVER VISA REFUSALS

[1](#)2. (C) POLOFF MET 05/02 WITH VATICAN MFA RUSSIA/NIS DIRECTOR ARCHBISHOP ALBERTO TRICARICO TO DISCUSS VATICAN/RUSSIAN RELATIONS IN WAKE OF EXPULSION OF TWO CLERGY MEMBERS IN RECENT DAYS. TRICARICO, ONE OF THE MOST SENIOR OF VATICAN MFA "COUNTRY DIRECTORS," WAS AGITATED, SAYING THE HOLY SEE HAD BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO ACCOMMODATE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH ALEXIY, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO POSITIVE RESPONSE. HE SAID THE GOR AVERRED CANCELLATION OF VISAS FOR THE TWO CLERGY WAS AN ACT OF "SOVEREIGNTY," BUT THE VATICAN WAS STILL WAITING FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE LEGAL BASIS FOR IT. HE WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET THAT THE GOR HAD DENIED BISHOP MAZUR THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO HIS FLOCK. TRICARICO UNDERSCORED THAT THE REFUSAL OF A VISA TO A BISHOP WAS TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY BY THE VATICAN -- IN THIS CASE IT WAS A "HISTORICAL ACT" WHICH DEFIED THE HOLY SEE'S 1989 AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. HE BELIEVED THAT THE GOR WOULDN'T REFUSE A VISA TO A BISHOP WITHOUT HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT KNOWING.

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[1](#)3. (C) TRICARICO SAID THE HOLY SEE HAD PROTESTED THE EXPULSION OF ITS CLERGY AT THE OSCE. WE ASKED HIM ABOUT THE RUSSIAN OSCE AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT THAT MAZUR'S VISA REFUSAL WAS LINKED TO THE USE OF THE OLD JAPANESE NAME FOR SAKHALIN DIOCESE'S SOUTHERN DISTRICT (REF B). TRICARICO SAID THAT WAS SPECIOUS. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE CHURCH HAD CALLED THAT DISTRICT KARAFUTO SINCE 1938, AND THAT IT WAS ONLY AFTER THE DECISION BY THE POPE TO MAKE THE FOUR DIOCESES OFFICIAL THAT THEY HAD HEARD ANY COMPLAINT ABOUT IT.

TRICARICO ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN RUSSIA

[1](#)4. (C) TO PUT THE CHURCH'S SITUATION IN RUSSIA INTO PERSPECTIVE, TRICARICO SAID IT NEEDS 100'S OF BISHOPS, BUT ONLY HAS FOUR. HE AGREED WITH THE GENERAL PRINCIPAL THAT CLERGY SHOULD BE NATIONALS OF THE COUNTRY WHERE THEY MINISTER, AND NOTED THAT THERE ARE NOW 74 SEMINARIANS IN THE ST. PETERSBURG SEMINARY. OVER TIME, HE FORECAST, FOREIGN CLERGY WON'T BE NEEDED. IN THE MEANTIME, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WAS DOING LOTS OF SOCIAL WORK IN RUSSIA, WITH HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL CENTERS FOR PENSIONERS. GIVEN THIS, MANY IN THE VATICAN FEEL PARTICULARLY BETRAYED BY THE GOR'S ACTIONS AFTER THE CREATION OF THE FOUR RUSSIAN DIOCESES. TRICARICO REPEATEDLY ASSERTED THAT CATHOLICS HAD BEEN PERSECUTED IN RUSSIA FOR 80 YEARS, THROWN INTO THE GULAG, AND MANY MARTYRED, AND "THIS IS OUR REWARD?"

[1](#)5. (C) TRICARICO SAID THAT THE POPE SINCERELY WISHED FOR A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX; HE WOULD GIVE UP
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ANYTHING "SAVE THE FREEDOM" OF HIS CATHOLIC FLOCK TO PRACTICE THEIR FAITH. BUT DESPITE ALL THE APOLOGIES FOR HISTORICAL TRANSGRESSIONS, THE OUTREACH TO ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN OTHER

COUNTRIES, THE DISCRETION THAT CATHOLICS PRACTICED IN RUSSIA (I.E. MAKING RUSSIANS WHO WISH TO CONVERT TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS OF REFLECTION BEFORE ACCEPTING THEM TO THE CHURCH), PATRIARCH ALEXIY AND THE ORTHODOX OFFER NAUGHT BUT A STONEWALL. TRICARICO AVERRED THAT THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CLERGY SUFFERED FROM "SOCIALIST WAYS OF THINKING; THEY WERE ALL COLLABORATORS IN PAST AND CAN'T SHAKE OLD WAYS" (PLEASE STRICTLY PROTECT).

WHAT NEXT?

16. (C) FOR NOW, BISHOP MAZUR IS COOLING HIS HEELS AT HIS OLD PARISH IN WARSAW. THE POPE IS HOPEFUL THAT ANY MOMENT THINGS WILL BREAK, AND MAZUR WILL BE PERMITTED TO RETURN. TRICARICO DID NOT MENTION WHETHER CAPRIO MIGHT RETURN TO MOSCOW. WE

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ACTION DRL-02

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	PERC-00	DS-00
	EUR-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	NSAE-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	EPAE-00	DSCC-00	SAS-00	/003W	

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O 081430Z MAY 02
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY

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REMINDING HIM OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, NOTING THAT WE HAD A REGULAR CHANNEL WITH THE VATICAN ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ISSUES. SAYING "THANK GOD FOR AMERICA -- THE ONLY COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND UP AND TALK ABOUT THESE ISSUES," TRICARICO INDICATED HE WOULD WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE VIEWS WITH THE NEW AMBASSADOR AT LARGE OR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IF AND WHEN HE VISITS VATICAN CITY.

16. (C) COMMENT: POST HAS OBSERVED ARCHBISHOP TRICARICO TO BE MORE EMOTIONAL IN HIS DISCOURSE THAN ARE MOST OTHER VATICAN
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COUNTRY DIRECTORS. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS AGE (HE WILL TURN 75 LATER THIS YEAR AND SUBMIT HIS RESIGNATION) HIS VIEWS ON THE ORTHODOX CLERGY'S "COLLABORATIONIST" PROCLIVITIES ARE SHARPENED. PRIOR TO TAKING MFA RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RUSSIA AND THE NIS COUNTRIES, TRICARICO HAD BEEN NUNCIO IN S/E ASIA FOR MYANMAR AND LAOS, AND HAD SERVED IN VARIOUS EUROPEAN NUNCIATURES. WHILE TRICARICO SOUNDED TO US SOMEWHAT CONFRONTATIONAL ON THE RUSSIAN ISSUES, WE BELIEVE THAT THE VATICAN ITSELF WILL, TRUE TO FORM, TAKE A LONG VIEW OF THE PROBLEM AND WORK PATIENTLY AND DISCRETELY TO ADVANCE ITS INTERESTS. EMBASSY CONVERSATIONS WITH RUSSIAN EMBASSY AND ORTHODOX CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES IN ROME WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL.
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